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was necessary to have the permission of his maternal grandfather and if it was impossible to communicate with him the operation would be delayed until the next year. 304 852

Each village had a special sacrifice post, called *ziro*, which was only used at this ceremony. It was set up in the *kianza* ("village square"). The post was made from a hard, red wood and was really two posts, planted one behind the other and lashed together with bands of vines near the top and bottom (Fig. 23, l). The rear post was forked, in imitation of a bull's horns, while the front post had a flat top which was on a level with the bottom of the crotch in the rear post. Dimensions were variable, but the *ziro* was rarely more than 4 to 4½ feet high. There was usually only one *ziro* in a village, but there might be several. Men who wished to honor their sons would erect new ones. No ceremony attended their erection.

On the day preceding the ceremony an ox was killed and the sacrificial parts cooked. The top of the hump was also cooked, cut in two, and a half of it impaled on each point of the *ziro*. Part of the cooked meat, with rice, was then put on the flat top of the front post. The sacrifice was performed by a regular *mpsaotra* ("sacrificial priest") chosen from one of the families having a child circumcised. After placing the offerings he invoked first the gods and then the ancestors by the regular formula, announcing that they were being summoned on account of the circumcision and asking their blessing so that there would be little bleeding and no accidents. The rest of the meat was divided, one part being cooked for food during the all-night ceremony while the other was left raw to be worn by the spearsmen next morning.

After the *ziro* sacrifice, the people assembled in the *trano be* ("assembly house") of the village, which was beside the *kianza* ("square"). If it was not large enough to hold them all two or three other houses were pressed into service. The *trano be* was divided into two parts by a rope stretched from the east to the west wall. The northern half of the house was called *toerosolompady*. Here the children were placed, with their close relatives on both the mother's and father's sides, and the people who would take part in the morning procession. In the southern half of the house, which had no special name, friends from the village assembled and danced and sang all night. The songs were meant to strengthen the children and insure them good fortune when they grew up. One was: 304 852 539

Ombilahy masangitra
Mena maso fandradraha.

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304 852 539 "An ox with sharp horns and red eyes always attacks." This would make the boys grow into strong, brave and warlike men. Another song was:

Rango, zara, rongo,
Zara rangoina taimarera.

"Sing, child, sing. A singing child does not bleed much." This warded off excessive bleeding. In this singing two or three persons sang the verse, and the whole company came in on the last word, the 852 usual Malagasy method. Everyone feasted but there was little 304 drinking, for decorum had to be preserved. It was expressly for- [834] bidden for the people in the north half of the house to have sexual relations during the night, even if they were man and wife, and for them to quarrel or make obscene remarks. Persons who broke these rules were fined 5.00 francs, for it would cause the children to bleed badly.

In the early morning, before sunrise, all the people from the north side of the house went down to the river, singing and dancing as they went. The group consisted of the children, each with his bearer, either six or twelve young women, and a guard of spearsmen, one for each child. The child was carried by a male relative: his maternal uncle, paternal uncle, father or elder brother, in order of desirability. The young women might be either married or unmarried, but must have fortunate names. The spearsmen were chosen for their prowess and did not have to be relatives. They were armed with spear and shield and wore a strip of raw meat, from the previous day's sacrifice, over the left shoulder and across the breast, like a bandoleer. This was to show that the children were of rich families and that meat was abundant. When the group arrived at the river the children's penises were washed. Men dipped up water and gave it to the girl water carriers in horn drinking cups which were either white or spotted with white earth. This water was called *ranondriana* ("water of the fall"), but any running water would do if it was taken so early in the morning that "no bird had passed over it." On the return the spearsmen went first, then the girls carrying water, then the children, carried so that they faced forward. Outside the village the procession was met by the people from the southern half of the *trano be* armed with spears, sharp bamboos and stones. There was a regular fight [781] in which people were often injured or even killed. If one of the spearsmen was wounded or fell, it was a bad omen for the child he represented, who would have a misfortune in war. Finally the column forced its way into the village.

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XIV. A LEGEND

(From manuscript of Sodaro Antoine)

538 [The Tanala have a rather rich folklore and delight in telling and hearing stories. Many of these are historical, others are romantic or humorous. The long contact which the Malagasy have had with Europeans, Arabs and Africans is reflected in this lore, which contains motifs from the most diverse sources. Most of the non-historical stories I heard among the Tanala are known to most other tribes and as several good collections of Malagasy folklore have already been published it is unnecessary to give them here. The appended story is given as a fair sample.]

221 538 After the harvest of the hill rice, at the end of the month *Valasira* [April], the Tanala return to their villages which have been abandoned for six months while the people lived at the *tavy* [clearings]. From May to July, when the cultivation of beans begins, the Tanala stay in their villages and do no work. On good evenings the people have their meal in common in the public square of the village. After the meal, the children gather around the old people and these tell them stories and proverbs. This is one of the stories they tell:

539 Ramangavato had two wives, Pelakatratroka, who was head wife, and Pelakasoa. Pelakatratroka had a son, Rangorobemana. Pelakasoa had two sons, Andriamanikandro and Andriamanibola. When Rangorobemana grew up, he married two wives, Rasoatombozato and Toibolaharea. His brothers stole his wives and carried them away overseas. Rangorobemana was desperate and went sadly to the forest to make a *tavy* [burned clearing for rice]. He lit a great fire and the smoke rose even to *Zanahary*. The first year *Zanahary* said nothing. The second year he was angry and sent the *fody*, the small parrot, the crow and many other birds to put out the fire, but, because they were accustomed to live on the earth, they did not return. Finally *Zanahary* sent one called Rahino, with a heavy rain. "In putting out my fire you are making me die," said Rangorobemana to Rahino. "You would do well to kill me." "I have not the right to kill you," answered Rahino, and he returned to the sky to lay Rangorobemana's complaint before *Zanahary*.

"If he does not make another *tavy*," said *Zanahary*, "and if he takes another wife, he will have a son. Still, at the moment of the birth I advise him to plant a pointed bamboo stake in front of the mother. If he does not, the child will come out by her head."

Rangorobemana married again and after a year a child was born. They wanted to receive the child on a mat, but he went out through the door and stood upright to the east of the houses. There he asked for the spear and shield of his father. He shook the spear once, and the spear broke. He threw the shield into the air and when he caught it again, it broke. Wishing to show his courage, he climbed the sacrifice post, and the post bent and fell to earth. Finally, he struck the post of the granary with his head, and the granary fell.

The boy's father named him Milolaza. When he grew up he made a spear which he called *tetaza beranohitay merik andro* [meaning that he could use its shaft for a bridge in time of flood or as firewood when it rained; a reference to its vast size]. He also made an axe which he called *tifia alarobia tsinin alahady* [lit., "forged Wednesday and repaired Sunday"].

Later, Rangorobemana had two daughters. He named one Tehandova (lit., "to wish to inherit") and the other Teholova [lit., "to wish to be inherited"].

Once Rangorobemana told his son Milolaza to go to the forest and gather firewood. Instead he broke the handle of his spear in two and used that for fuel. Half of it was enough to keep a newly delivered mother warm for a week. [A reference to the Tanala practice of "roasting" women immediately after childbirth.]

One day he asked his father to give him a slave so that he could offer it as a prize to anyone who was willing to fight with him. "There is no need for that," said Rangorobemana. "If you are so brave, go fight with the wild animals in the forest." He went and took his two sisters with him. He told them to prepare food while he went to make a *tany* in the forest. A few moments later Tangidibemola, a great monster of the region, appeared before the two girls and growled: "Who dares to enter my territory? I am the only master of the forest. If I have big eyes, it is because of my vigilance. If I have big feet, it is because of the constant journeys I make over my territory. If I want to rest, I sit on the point of a spear. If a bit of dust falls in my eye, I take it out with a needle. When I am angry, the forest burns and all the lakes dry up." The two girls were frightened and fled. The next day the three returned to the same place. Milolaza said to his sisters: "If you are afraid, go make the *tany* and I will cook the food." Tangidibemola appeared before him raging and made the same boasts. Milolaza struck him with his magic axe and the monster died. The three returned to the village and announced to their father the death of the monster.

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539 Milolaza then sought out Retsefa [not previously mentioned] and said: "If you dare to fight with me, I will give you that slave." "Good," said Retsefa. "Good," said Milolaza, "but I warn you in advance that I will pursue you to the end. Our fight will not end until one land snail has eaten a liana as big around as a man. It will not end until the horn of a gnat grows to be as big as a barrel. I will not leave you until the head of the *ana* [a small plant used as greens] is big enough to make a rat guard for a granary." "Keep your slave," said Retsefa, "I won't fight with you."

When Milolaza returned home, his father said: "If you are so brave, go find Songotriparilava. His belt is twisted from nettles and his clothing is made from thorny vines." Milolaza sought out Songotriparilava and challenged him to fight for a wager. He accepted. Said Milolaza: "Before we begin, I warn you that our fight will not end until one of us becomes so small that he must climb on a rice mortar to milk a *sora* [a small insectivor, slightly larger than a rat]. It will not end until the fat from one lark is enough to fill eight calabashes. It will not end until the milk of an ant will fill a milk gourd. Until that time, I will pursue you." "Keep your slave," said Songotriparilava, "I will not wrestle with you."

Milolaza returned home and asked his father who was the most redoubtable man or monster of the region. "Go find Andriambo of Ambodiria," his father said. He challenged Andriambo, who accepted. "Before we fight," said Milolaza, "I warn you that our battle will not end until one can do up honey in the leaf of the *anjasidy* [not identified]. It will not end until fish go on land and bees make combs in the water." Andriambo also refused combat.

Milolaza returned to his father. "All the champions are now defeated," he said. "I will now go and fight Andriamanikandro and Andriamanibola, who stole your wives. Where do they live?" "On the other side of the sea," his father answered.

Milolaza made a huge shield. He brought it back to the village and tried whether he could maneuver it. He threw it into the air and it went so high that hawks perched on its top and the wild bees built their nests below. Then he went to get his father's wives from those who had stolen them.

He crossed the sea and finally arrived at the village of the two brothers. He stealthily approached the spring where the village got its water and found an old woman there. He killed and flayed her. Then he put on her skin and sat down above the spring. The women of the village, coming to the spring, saw a stranger there and were

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afraid and turned back. Finally Komondio, the grandmother of the 539
brothers, went to the spring herself. She brought the supposed old
woman to the village. "Where did you get that old hag?" Andria-
manikandro demanded. "It is a poor woman I found by the spring."
"Take her to your own house then, she has a bad smell," said Andria-
manibola; so Komondio took the false old woman to her house.

"Tomorrow we will tramp the rice fields," Andriamanikandro said to his grandmother [i.e., drive cattle back and forth over them to reduce the soil to soft mud]. "Stay in the village and give food to that hag." "I will go with you," said Milolaza. "No," said Komondio, "stay in the house or you may be hurt by the cattle." "I will not go down into the rice field," said Milolaza, "I will stay on the dike." When they came to the rice fields Milolaza got into a dispute with Andriamanikandro over an eel which they had found in the mud. Both seized it and pulled and it broke in two in the middle. "That is no old woman," said Andriamanikandro, "I will kill her." However, his grandmother would not permit it.

"Tomorrow we are going to the chase," said Andriamanibola to Komondio, "stay in the village with your friend." "I will go there, too," said Milolaza. "Don't go," said Komondio. "The wild pigs of Ankazomiadiloha are so numerous that you have to swim to cross their urine and to wade to the breast in their excrement." Nevertheless, Milolaza went with the two brothers. Andriamanikandro placed himself in the pig run. Andriamanibola made a circuit, to drive the pigs and make them pass in front of Milolaza. Milolaza struck the pigs with his right hand and the dogs with his left, killing them all. The brothers were furious at the death of their dogs and wanted to kill him, but Komondio opposed them.

"Tomorrow we will go to the *kibory* [tomb of the gens] to pray to our ancestors," said Andriamanikandro to his grandmother. "Send your wives to my house," said Komondio, "and we will pound rice." When the women had come to Komondio's house, Milolaza took off his disguise and said to Rasoatombozato and Toibolaharea: "I am the son of Rangorobemana and I have come seeking for you. Follow me." The two women went with him.

When the brothers returned, the grandmother told them: "Your wives were carried off by force by the false old woman." "I will pursue them," said Andriamanikandro. After a little he caught up with them and threw his spear at Milolaza. Milolaza parried the cast, turning to all sides. The spear followed him and finally fixed itself in a rock in the middle of the sea. Milolaza, in turn,

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539 threw his spear at Andriamanikandro. He fled, but the spear followed him unceasingly. At last it passed through the trunk of a banana tree, through the belly of an ox, and fixed itself in the sacrifice post to the east of his house. "We are equal," said Andriamanikandro. "I have never seen an enemy equal to you. We will make blood brotherhood, then you may take the women back to your father." Thus by heroism and cunning Milolaza delivered his father's wives from the hands of his rivals.